

Derelict Crab Trap Removal Programs in South East and Gulf Coast States



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DERELICT or GHOST?



North Carolina

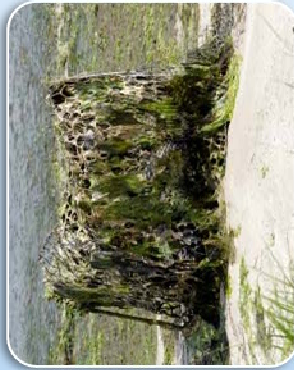
- *Abandoned* (derelict): carry an owner's ID, but their owners haven't checked them in seven days
- *Ghost* : no buoy or identifying tag attached to the pot

Florida



- *Derelict*: lacks more than two of the following: i) buoy; ii) line; iii) current trap tag (if lobster or stone crab trap) or identification tag (if blue crab trap); and iv) current license

Mississippi



- *Derelict*: a trap that is unbuoyed, unmarked, and not actively fished.

SOURCES of DERELICT TRAPS

Abandonment

- Logistical problems with transport for either temporary storage or permanent disposal
- Availability of temporary storage sites

Improper Disposal

- Acceptability at landfills
- Disposal fees

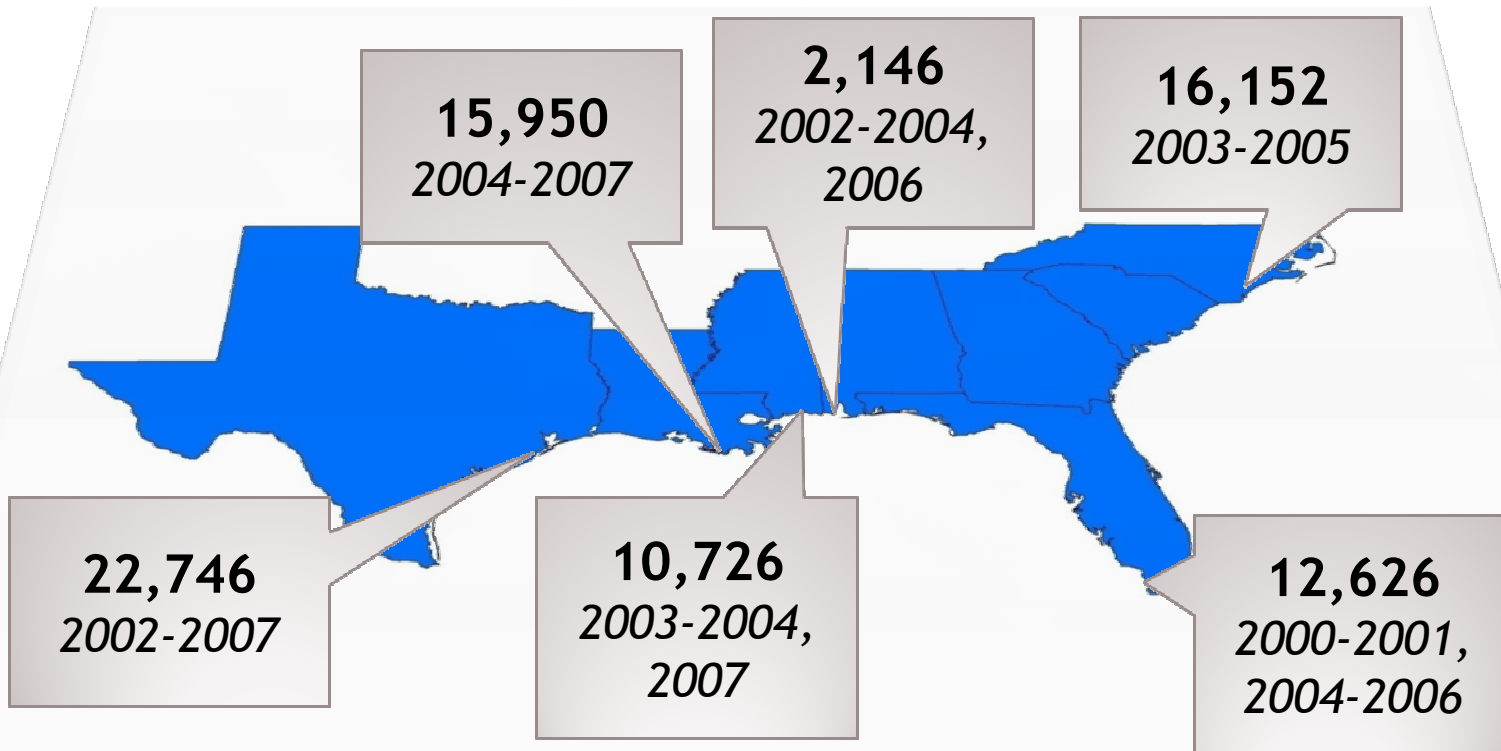


Inadvertent loss

- Weather/hydrological factors
- Senescence of buoys, lines, or knots
- Negligence
- Use of plastic jugs or bottle
- Clipping of float lines by vessel propellers
- Intentional cutting of buoy lines by vandals

(Guillory, 1996)

Est. NUMBER of TRAPS COLLECTED



At least 80,346 Traps have been removed since 2000

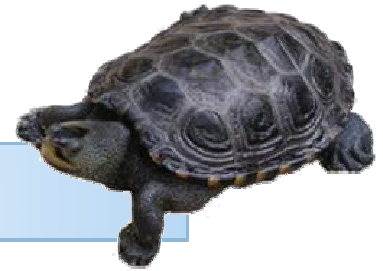
The GSMFC estimates that between the five Gulf coast states approximately 250,000 blue crab traps are lost each year
...an estimated **1,750,000** since 2000

S.C. CRAB TRAP MATH

Approximately 33,000 crab pots were commercially licensed in South Carolina (2004-05)		33,000
A field count suggests that only about 1/3 of the pots licensed are fished	$1/3 * 33,000 =$	11,000
119,255 individual saltwater recreational licenses purchased (2007)		119,255
28% of licensed recreational saltwater anglers participated in recreational crabbing	28% of 119,255 =	33,391
SC law allows individuals to fish two crab pots without a license	$33,391 * 2 =$	66,782
Total estimated traps being fished over 1 year		77,782
Estimates of trap loss range from 20% to 50%	20% of 77,782 =	15,556

DERELICT TRAP ISSUES

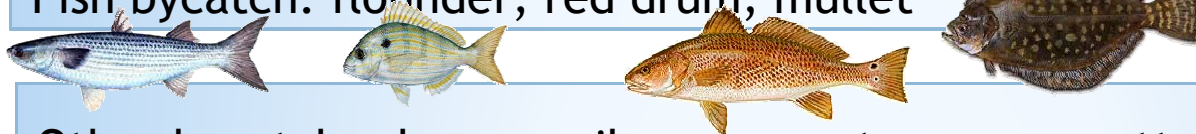
Diamondback terrapins...



Blue crabs: traps retain excessive numbers of sublegal size (Guillory and Prejean 1997)



Fish bycatch: flounder, red drum, mullet



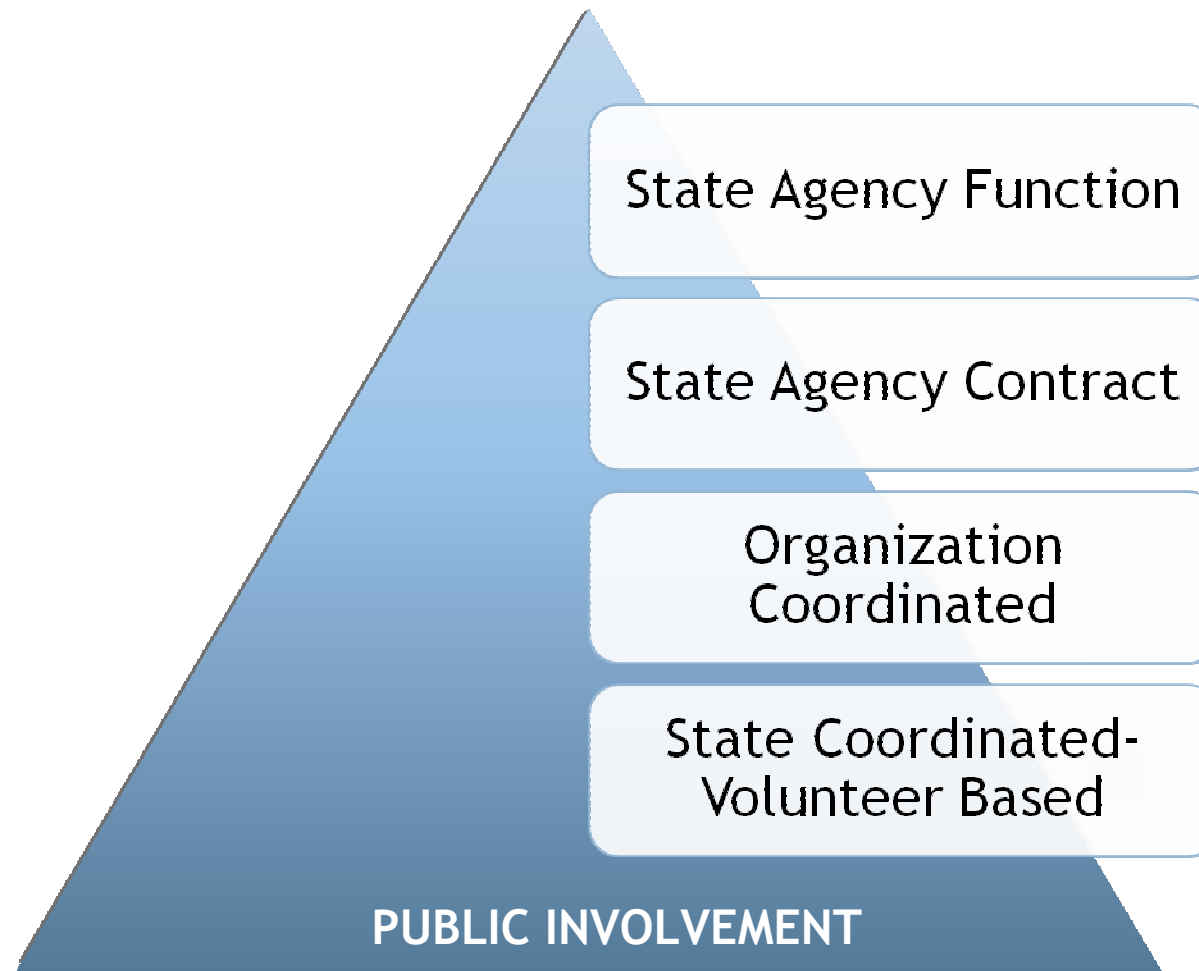
Other bycatch: clapper rail, cormorant, raccoon, otter

Navigation hazard

Pollution



TRAP REMOVAL PROGRAM MODELS



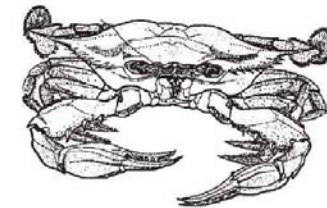
North Carolina

State Agency Function

- Division of Marine Fisheries - Marine Patrol.
Marine patrol aircraft used to locate abandoned pots and officers in boats used to retrieve them.
- 2 week closure mandated in blue crab regulations

North Carolina Fishery Management Plan

Blue Crab



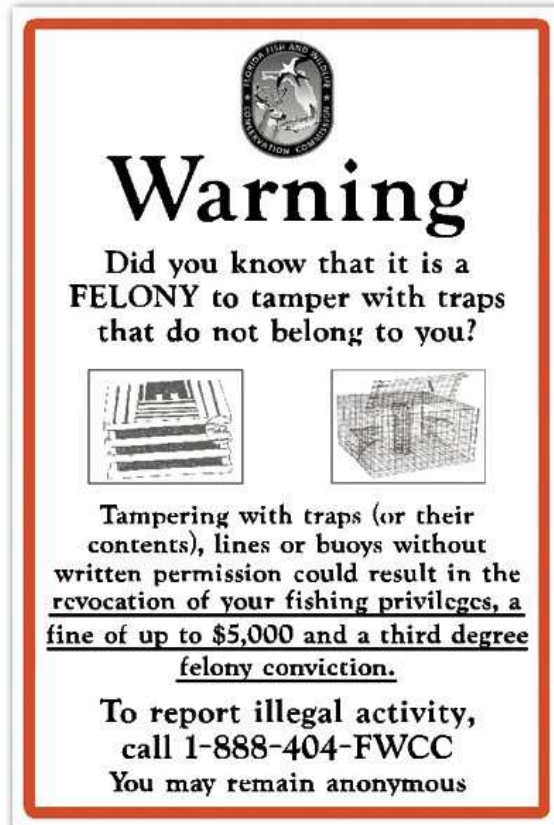
December 2004

Florida

State Agency Contract

- Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission contracts with Organized Fishermen of Florida to provide a workforce of fisherman with trap pulling vessels.
 - A fee of \$10 per abandoned trap is assessed to the trap owner of each trap retrieved from waters during the closed season.
 - Groups may seek approval for trap clean-up events
-

Florida



Commission Rule 68B-55.003 (1) the retrieval of derelict traps/trap debris is permitted by Commission employees or authorized groups.



Apalachicola NERR organized trap clean-up, 2006

Alabama, Mississippi

Organization Coordinated

- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Marine Resources Division, Coastal Conservation Association and Mobile Bay NEP.
 - Experts interact with organization group leaders, each group selects a stretch of shoreline
 - Mississippi Department of Marine Resources & Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
 - Mississippi also contracts with fishermen
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Louisiana, Texas

State Coordinated- Volunteer Based

- The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) is the lead agency; a planning committee assists the LDWF with publicity...*publicity and volunteer recruitment are essential* and are heavily emphasized
 - The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department designates sites in each of the eight major bay systems for trap collection, volunteers can work at their own pace during the closure as time and weather permit.
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Louisiana

Saturday, February 23 through Sunday,
March 2, 2008, Terrebonne Bay Estuary

Year	Area	Acres	Traps	Boats
2004	Total	380,000	6894	90+
2004a	Upper Terrebonne Bay Estuary	198,000	6676	90
2004b	Vermilion Bay	182,000	218	?
2005	Total	378,450	4623	46+
2005a	Sabine Lake	35,400	4	2
2005b	Middle Terrebonne Bay Estuary	51,300	2437	23
2005c	Breton Sound Estuary	177,250	1941	21
2005d	Vermilion Bay/Cote Blanche Bay	114,500	241	?
2006	Total	207,658	2935	31+
2006	Southwest Terrebonne Bay Estuary	207,658	2935	31+
2007	Total	439,600	1498	16
2007a	East Lake Pontchartrain	270,600	774	13
2007b	Upper Barataria Bay	169,900	724	3
2004-2007	Overall Total	1,405,708	15950	183+



<http://www.derelictcrabtrap.net/index.html>


CLOSURE

Closure		Collection Time Period
North Carolina	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 week closure mandated in blue crab management plan
Florida		Lobster & stone crab traps removed during closed season for each species
Alabama	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nearshore: (<500 yards): 1 day Offshore: 1 st 7 days of shrimp season
Mississippi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12 days, traps considered abandoned after 1 st 7 days
Louisiana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9 day rotating area
Texas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10 day state wide

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Participants	
North Carolina	Division of Marine Fisheries
Florida	Fish and Wildlife Commission, approved organizations
Alabama	Dept. Cons. Nat. Resources, CCA, Mobile Bay NEP, NOAA CSC, local buisness
Mississippi	Dept. Marine Resources, GCRL, Grand Bay NERR
Louisiana	Dept. Wildlife & Fisheries, BTNEP, CCA, Sea Grant
Texas	Texas Parks and Wildlife, CCA, FishAmerica Foundation, local business

TRAP DISPOSAL

Landfill 			
North Carolina	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		In 2005, \$4,200 recovered from sale of some of the pots
Florida	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Trap owner can reclaim trap within holding period
Alabama	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		*No recycling for social reasons
Mississippi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Louisiana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Texas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disposal donations at local level

STARTING a PROGRAM



“GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING DERELICT TRAP REMOVAL PROGRAMS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO”

Challenges

- Ordinances or regulations that prohibit the collection of traps by the general public, shrimp fishermen and other user groups



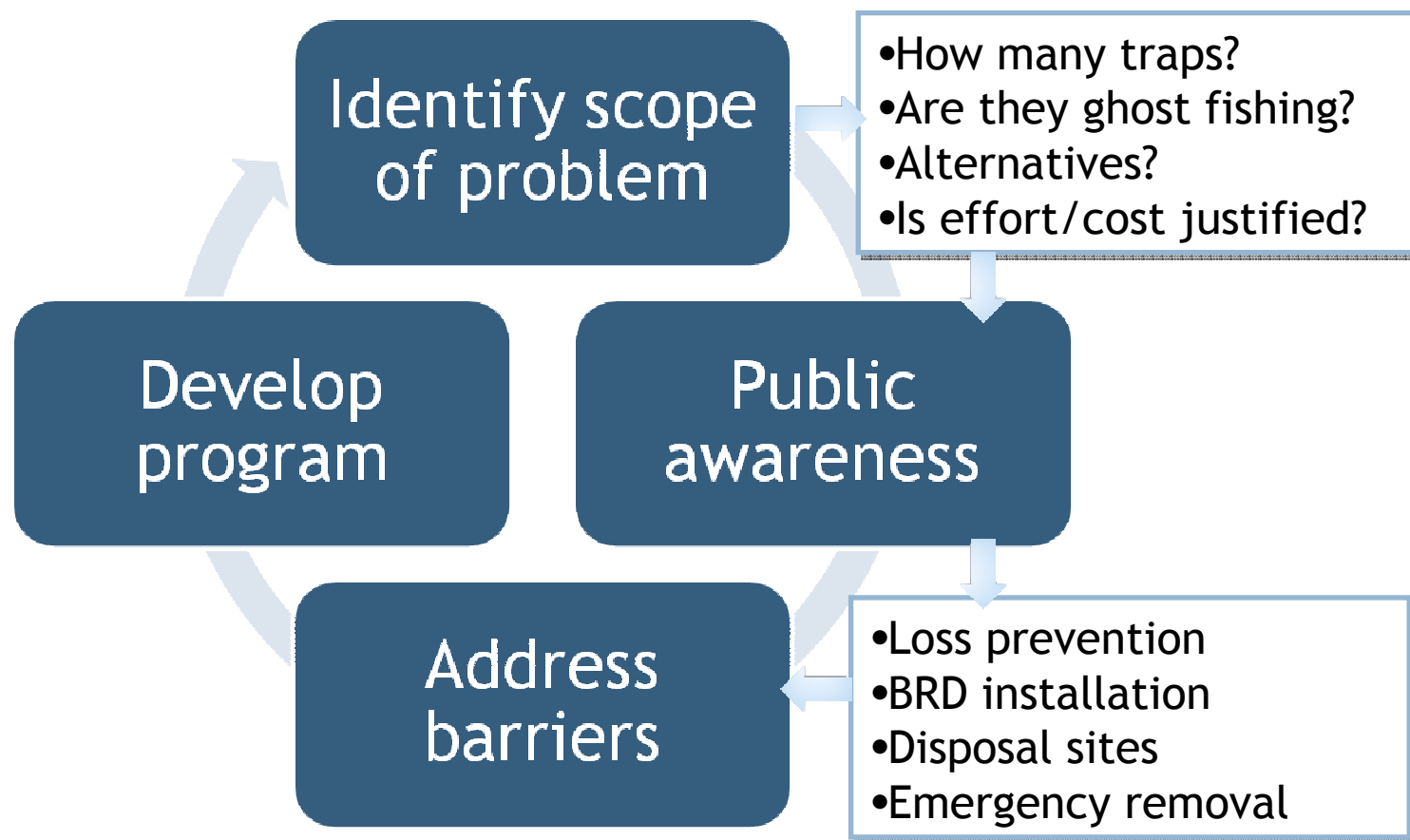
S.C. REGULATIONS

- It is unlawful: (1) to remove, willingly damage, or interfere with any fishing equipment belonging to another [Section 50-5-105 (A)]
 - No person may retrieve any unattended recreational equipment used pursuant to this section unless the owner is present. A person may retrieve equipment with the written permission of the owner, but no fish may be retained. [Section 50-5-330 (D)]
 - The Department may inspect traps for compliance with this section at any time. If the Department finds any trap:(1) set in violation of this section; (2) containing excessive dead catch or only dead catch; or(3) with buoy, line, or trap displaying excessive marine growth, the trap is contraband and must be seized and disposed of as provided in this chapter. [Section 50-5-555 (E)]
-

Challenges

- Ordinances or regulations that prohibit the collection of traps by the general public, shrimp fishermen and other user groups
 - Support of fishing interests
 - Difficulty of location and removal of traps
 - Liability issues
 - Organizing volunteers can be highly labor intensive
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NEXT STEPS?



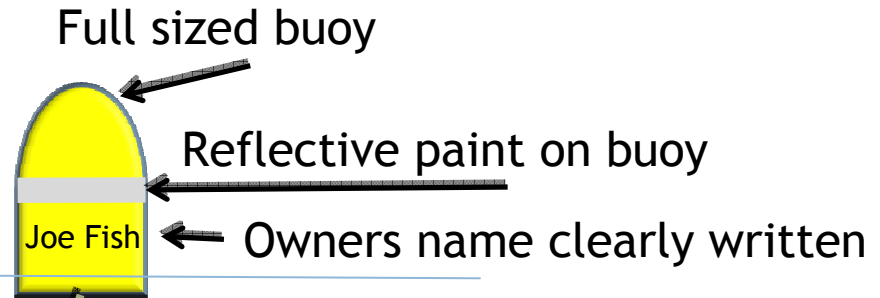
PREVENTION



Remove traps
before a storm

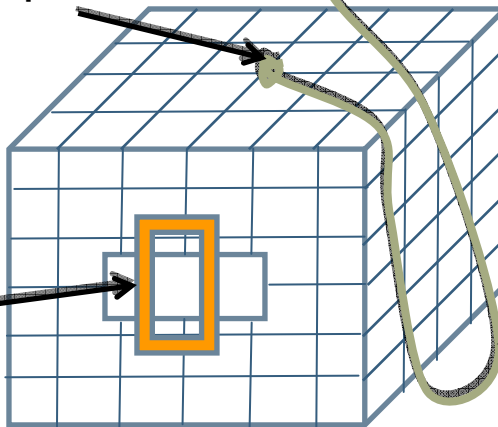


Check trap
twice a day



Proper knot

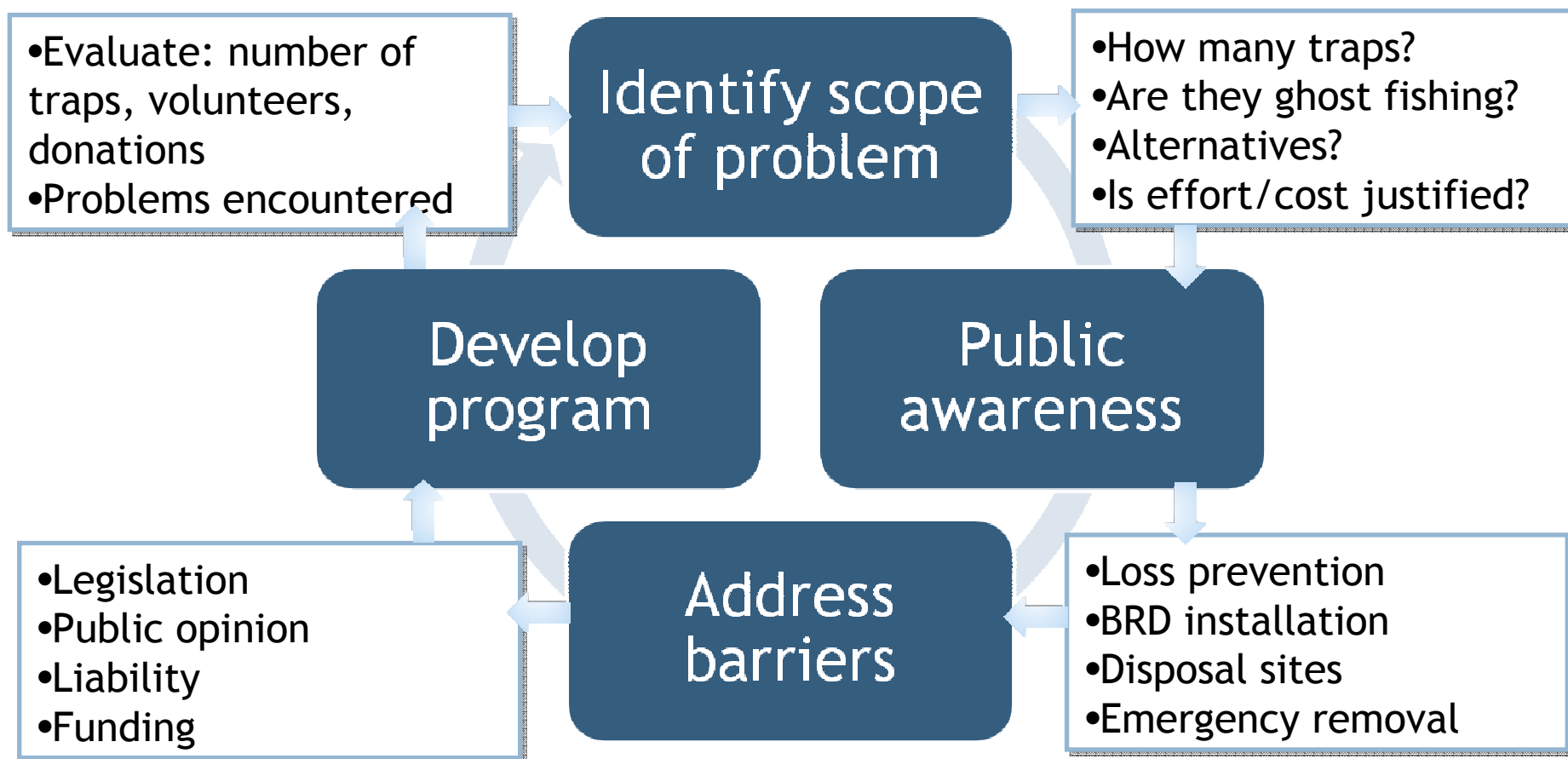
Bycatch Reduction Device

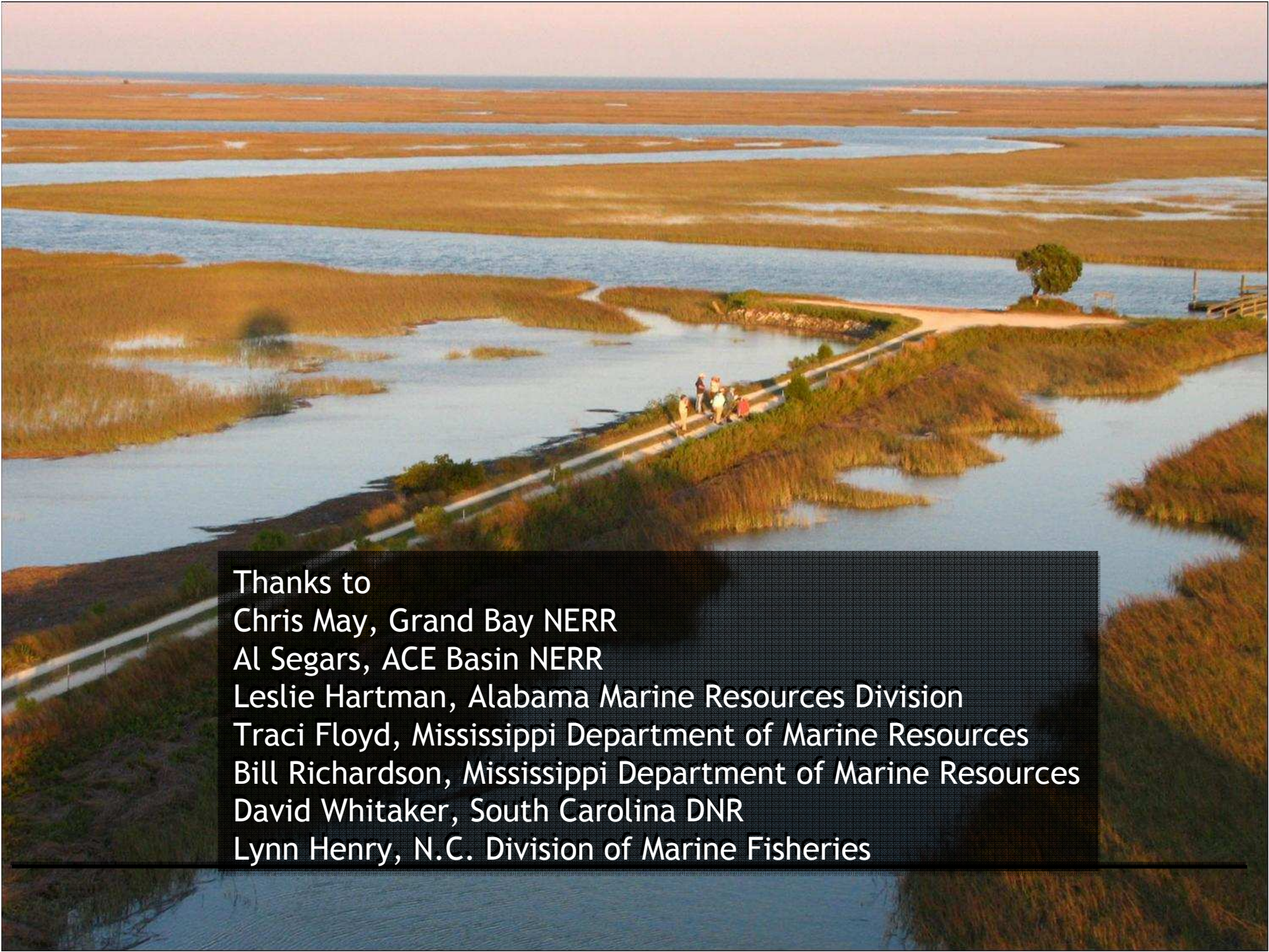


Enough non-floating line to
prevent the buoy from being
submerged at high tide



NEXT STEPS?



An aerial photograph of a coastal wetland or marsh. A dirt path winds through the landscape, which is a mix of blue water and golden-brown marsh grasses. A group of about seven people is standing on the path in the middle of the frame. In the background, a small wooden dock is visible on the right side. The sky is a pale, hazy blue, suggesting a clear day.

Thanks to
Chris May, Grand Bay NERR
Al Segars, ACE Basin NERR
Leslie Hartman, Alabama Marine Resources Division
Traci Floyd, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Bill Richardson, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
David Whitaker, South Carolina DNR
Lynn Henry, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries